

Proclamations declaring National Former Prisoner of War Recognition Day happen every year, but this year it is particularly meaningful as we remember those from past conflicts and also focus on those service members who are currently engaged in the war in Iraq. Our thoughts and prayers are with all of our coalition forces and their families, particularly those who may have lost a loved one or whose family member or friend has been listed as missing or as a POW. Many families throughout the United States are having to call upon reserves of strength to get through this difficult time, but they should never forget that the entire nation shares their hope for the future, their joy in times of good news, and if need be, their grief in loss.

In recent days, the harrowing accounts told by Americans who were held by the Iraqis during the 1991 Gulf War have raised fears that the men and women who are missing today may suffer similarly criminal treatment. The evidence that we have so far indicates that this is the case. I am very concerned, as I am sure my colleagues are concerned, that we must do everything in our power to ensure that those who have committed war crimes are brought to justice.

Last Friday, the House Armed Services Committee held a hearing to examine the international law regulating the treatment of prisoners of war. Yesterday, House Armed Services Committee Chairman DUNCAN HUNTER and I sent a letter to the President suggesting that post-World War II's Nuremberg trials be used as a framework to convene an international military tribunal for the prosecution of war crimes committed during Operation Iraqi Freedom. Just as the Nuremberg trials were conducted by the four nations who won that war—the United States, Great Britain, France, and the Soviet Union—so, too, could a tribunal resulting from this war be conducted by the principal coalition partners: the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, Poland, and Kuwait. Whatever system is put in place, justice will be our priority.

Without a doubt, we live in a special country. Americans have a spirit of idealism that cannot be broken, and our citizens strive to serve our country however possible. This spirit is evident throughout our nation, but also in the U.S. Congress, where several former POWs serve with distinction. Congressman SAM JOHNSON of Texas, Senator JOHN MCCAIN of Arizona, and former Congressman Pete Peterson of Florida could have very easily and justifiably returned home from Vietnam and devoted their lives to things other than government service. But they chose to continue their contribution by participating in electoral politics and doing the work that makes our American democracy a success. Their stories, as young men in uniform and in their later careers, inspire us all.

On this National Former POWs Recognition Day, we honor and express our gratitude to all former prisoners of war, whether they served during World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, the Gulf War, or the current Iraq War. There is absolutely nothing we can do to make up for the sacrifices our service members and their families endured during their captivity in enemy hands. But as a nation, we can, and we must, thank them for their willingness to pay the price required to ensure America's freedoms. In the Congress, we must also be vigilant to ensure that our nation

follows through on the promises we have made to our veterans and former POWs. As fellow citizens, it is the least we can do to begin to repay the debt that we owe them for their service to the American people.

Mrs. MALONEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor former prisoners of war, and to thank them for their bravery and dedication to our nation.

The United States military has no equal. Our servicemen and women are the best-trained and are the best-prepared to accomplish successfully their missions. However, as the war in Iraq has reminded us, we cannot always prevent the worst from happening.

The conditions for POWs, more often than not, are too difficult and too painful to imagine. I can only imagine the worry and the uncertainty that their families must feel each day until their loved one is brought home. The rescue of Jessica Lynch showed not only the commitment of our troops to finding their fellow servicemembers, but the bravery of Lynch herself, who stayed strong and focused.

Throughout history, America's military men and women have traveled around the world to fight for the causes of freedom and democracy. In this selfless pursuit, they knew that the battle would not always be easy. We owe them all an enormous debt of gratitude.

We cannot forget our veterans who helped to make this country what it is today and who have brought peace to other nations across the globe. Our nation's fighting men and women are currently engaged in a military conflict in Iraq. While they fight bravely for the principles upon which the United States was founded, we at home cannot turn our backs on veterans who deserve to have access to the benefits that they deserve.

Today, we recognize National Former Prisoner of War Recognition Day. I believe that each day we should remember these brave individuals, and the sacrifices that they made for all of us.

Thank you.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on the subject of my special order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Maryland?

There was no objection.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 2 o'clock and 43 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

□ 1846

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. CANTOR) at 6 o'clock and 46 minutes p.m.

FURTHER MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Mr. Monahan, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate agreed to the report of the committee of conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the amendment of the Senate to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 95) entitled "Concurrent resolution establishing the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2004 and setting forth appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2003 and 2005 through 2013."

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair desires to announce that pursuant to rule XXVII, as a result of the adoption by the House and the Senate of the conference report on House Concurrent Resolution 95, House Joint Resolution 51, increasing the statutory limit on the public debt, has been engrossed and is deemed to have passed the House on April 11, 2003.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. DEFAZIO (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today after 3:00 p.m. on account of schedule and district work period.

Mr. REYES (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today on account of attending a memorial service for the soldiers of the 507th Maintenance Company who were killed in Iraq.

Mr. BOYD (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today from 1:00 p.m. through the district work period on account of official business in the district.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

(The following Member (at the request of Mr. STENHOLM) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. STENHOLM, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. GUTKNECHT) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. FRANKS of Arizona, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. GUTKNECHT, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. FOLEY, for 5 minutes, today. (The following Members (at their own request) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. SHIMKUS, for 5 minutes, today.

SENATE BILLS REFERRED

Bills of the Senate of the following titles were taken from the Speaker's